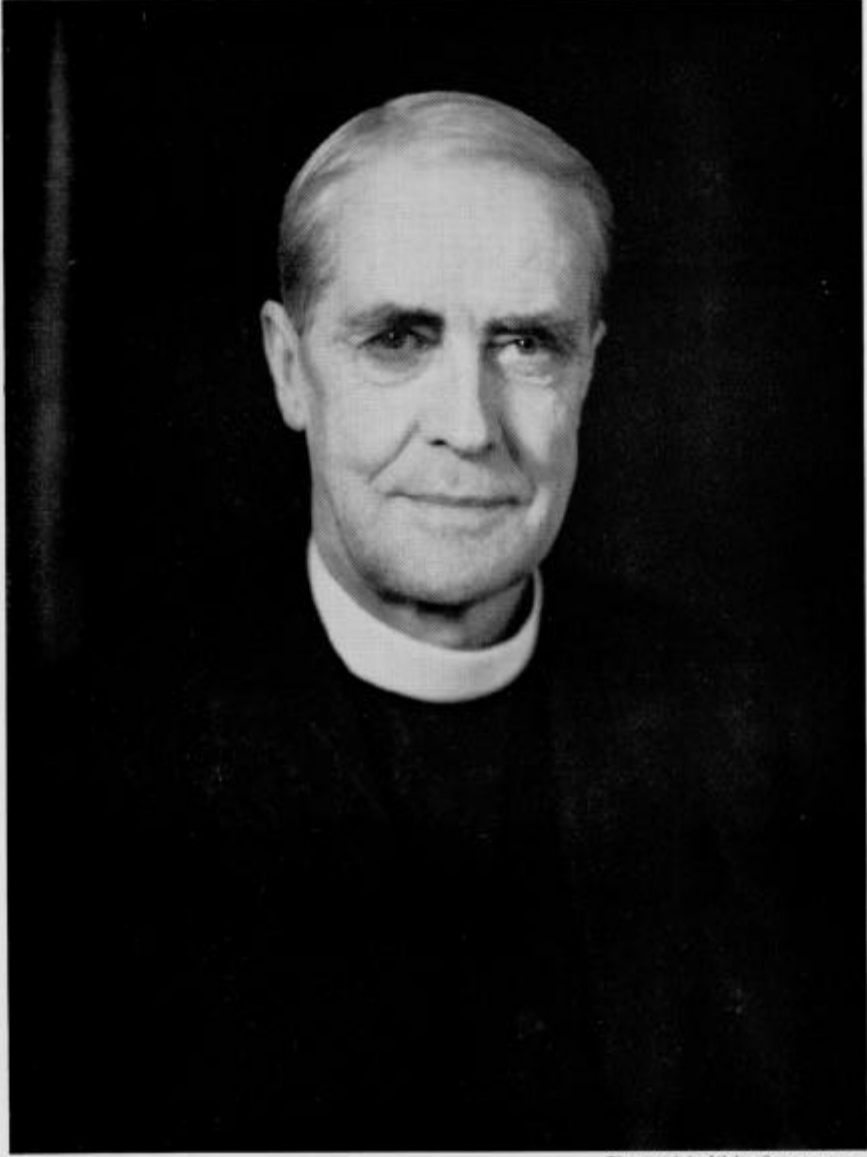


PLATE XCVI



*Photograph by Walter Stoneman, 1957*

CHARLES EARLE RAVEN

## CHARLES EARLE RAVEN

(1885-1964)

CHARLES EARLE RAVEN was born on 4 July 1885 and his earliest memory was of Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee as he approached his second birthday—'the tents in Kensington Gardens and the sellers of flags and souvenirs in the streets'.<sup>1</sup> Both his father and his mother encouraged his studies. His father, a lawyer, who had been brought up in New Zealand, did Latin with him at breakfast, and they walked and talked together as the one went to his day-school and the other to the Temple. His mother, while lying ill, worked through the first pages of a Greek grammar so as to help Charles, aged 10, with his first Greek prep. Here, at home, was learning and friendship. As for religion, his father, he tells us, seldom went to Church, except in the holidays, and 'it seemed as if he didn't need it'.<sup>2</sup> His mother, on the other hand, had a quiet and deep faith, and when she was not ill, went to Church and Charles went with her.

At 13 he went to Uppingham, where at first a certain detachment kept him happy. But before long his schooldays became grim and painful. He played no games 'in a school crazy for athletics'; he was 'passionately fond of nature, and never allowed to study her'; he was reserved about sex 'in an atmosphere loud with indecency'. As for his faith, years earlier the Curate at a children's service had ensured that in Charles's mind the wrath of God should eclipse his love, that the Lord should stand for punishment not help, and that prayers were regarded as a propitiation. By comparison the contribution of Uppingham may even be thought fortunate. It merely ensured that Charles finished his schooling 'without any real understanding of Christianity either in theory or in practice'.<sup>3</sup> True he had been confirmed at 16 and of his Confirmation he wrote that 'the actual service thrilled me to the core'.<sup>4</sup> By contrast the instruction he was given was as discreditable as the book of devotions which he received afterwards. Back in these early days we can discover the seeds of conflict between a wider vision and an all-too-articulate theology or an all-too-rigid institutionalism, which fail to contain it.

But Uppingham at least taught him Classics and he gained an

<sup>1</sup> *A Wanderer's Way*, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

entrance scholarship to Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, where years later he was to be an Honorary Fellow. From his undergraduate days we may perhaps select four incidents as pointers to the future.

From the Lent Term, 1907, Raven shared the editorship of *Granta* for a year with R. M. Pattison Muir, and in May 1907 occurred an incident that already shows his energetic indignation, his reforming zeal, and his moral courage, and also reveals him as the controversial figure he was destined to remain throughout his life. Raven arranged for three Trinity men to write an article for *Granta* about corruption in the science laboratories. The boys who prepared the slides and exhibits for examinations were selling lists of them to candidates. Professor Langley was not surprisingly furious and threatened a libel action if Raven failed to prove his case in twenty-four hours. Late that night when, for all practical purposes, time was running out, Raven visited the professor with his evidence marshalled and his witnesses fortified; and Langley had to yield.

At Uppingham his taste for natural history in the particular form of moth-hunting was one of those idiosyncrasies that did not make for happiness in the school; but his years at the University saw an increasing concern to relate his scientific interests with his classical and theological studies. For though he gained a first-class in the Classical Tripos Part I in 1907 he had rather wearied of Classics so he turned to Part II of the Theological Tripos to gain wider scope in a section which ranged over the Greek and Latin Fathers, and also involved the study of history, doctrine, and philosophy. In the essay paper of the Tripos he started to write on 'Darwinism and Theology', but after three pages decided that he ought rather to write on an alternative subject, 'The bearing of the Logos doctrine upon modern theories of the person of Christ'. He finished by incorporating into the final script the pages he had written at the start, and it was on the strength of the essay that the examiners judged his first-class of special distinction. Here was his first endeavour to write science and theology, his first portrayal of the single vision.

In April 1906, calling at the Lodge he met Miss Margaret E. Buchanan Wollaston, a niece of the Master, and by July—'a delicious recklessness'<sup>1</sup>—they were engaged, and married in 1910. A lady of quiet charm and uncommon kindness, she was indeed for thirty-four years to prove a helpmate to her husband. There must be a proper reticence about whatever most closely

<sup>1</sup> *A Wanderer's Way*, p. 50.

touches the heart. But let it be said that without her love, a lonely and controversial figure might have found it impossibly hard to preserve sensitivity and vision and human warmth. So often, and not least in the war-time tensions of a College, she mediated reconciliation and peace.

Already then, there is the controversial reformer, the sensitive friend, the lover all the more lovable for his recklessness, and the intellectual venturer after a unity of theology and science. But what of faith and religious conviction? In his undergraduate days, almost the only religious society that affected the students was the C.I.C.C.U. and though he sometimes admired the zeal and courage and devotion of its members, 'their intellectual position was simply a mockery'.<sup>1</sup> Christians seemed as futile as the scientists were hostile. Waismannism and Mendelian determinism played havoc with Christian doctrines of God and man. However, an ancient habit of chapel attendance, an occasional duty to read lessons, and his best friend being a choral scholar—all these together conspired to take him to chapel. But for the most part he was a 'pure pagan'.<sup>2</sup> 'The frost at school', he wrote, 'had nipped my buds severely, and though Cambridge was a spring-time, it took me a long time to respond to its warmth.' But then there occurred the first of two incidents which may perhaps be called conversion experiences.

It was in the Christmas vacation of 1905/6, when he was 20, that 'the miracle happened'. 'Suddenly the whole world seemed transformed' . . . and the 'next two terms were spent in a haze of happiness.'<sup>2</sup> Here was the sense that 'time had stopped, that suddenly the visible world had become transparent'; that things eternal had been revealed in things temporal. With characteristic honesty he asked himself whether there might not be an adequate psychological explanation of all this, but he rightly judged that the enriching effects of the vision and its influence and stability over weeks and years indicated its reliability.

Not that the way ahead was now clear, but he began to realize that religion could not be brushed aside, and that if some Christians had been his chief obstacle to an acceptance of Christianity, there were others whose lives radiated 'a power of loving'.<sup>3</sup> Even if some Christian beliefs seemed incredible, there was the need to inquire and explore further. We may significantly recall that in a year's time he was to turn from Classics to the Theological trips. But the study of Christian doctrine with

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 46.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 58.

Professor Bethune-Baker made no easier an acceptance of many traditional Christian claims. Origen who seemed to share a 'liberal and scientific outlook upon nature and human history',<sup>1</sup> 'whose breadth of knowledge and boldness of speculation were wholly free from the conventionalities of pietism or the desire to reach a fore-ordained conclusion'<sup>2</sup>—this Origen had been condemned as a heretic by a church which some now regarded as infallible.

So when the prospect of a Fellowship arose his mind did not turn to the possibility of ordination, but he decided that he would be a lay student of theology 'free from all tests and ecclesiastical trammels'.<sup>2</sup> After the experience of 1905/6 he was no longer in doubt of the existence of God, but he tells us that he had as yet no first-hand experience of Jesus as living and present. It was only in the second incident that he was to gain this assurance, and thereafter to seek Orders.

There was a year or so before the Fellowship election, and he spent this year as Assistant Secretary for Secondary Education under the Liverpool City Council. Here in the great city he found friendship, friends who not only shared his interest in moths, but who also led him to an adult school in Birkenhead where he gave his first lecture—on evolution, and friends who took him to a Congregational church where he gave his first religious address; friends who led him to a boys' club in a large empty warehouse in the slums behind Bold Street, and on Sunday evenings to a huge undenominational children's service in the old Colosseum, where the place was 'crammed with waifs . . . and the odour was like that of an Irish cattle boat in a rough sea'.<sup>3</sup> But here he discerned the flame of devotion burning in others, and he gained an unbounded belief in God's poor, and a high indignation that these human lives should be thwarted and misused. From many directions it was slowly borne in on him that the Church was to be found primarily not in its formal services, not in its doctrines and ritual, but in the loving and serving which he found in the warehouse clubs and on those Sunday evenings at the Colosseum. Bishops, orders, liturgies, creeds, forms of prayer—these he was to conclude were necessary and useful: but they were not primary; they presupposed a community and a living faith.

It was in a mood of restlessness and inquiry that he went on a bank holiday to visit his friend from college days who was now a curate at Stoke-on-Trent. His friend was ill and as he wandered

<sup>1</sup> *A Wanderer's Way*, p. 67.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 73.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 81.

up to his friend's rooms thinking of their love for the countryside and music and all beautiful things, the place seemed unutterably dismal. He entered his friend's room:

I found him, and behold he was not alone. No other phrase will express it. . . . Since I had seen him, he had found Jesus. His whole direction and outlook were altered under the new influence: there was joy and quiet confidence in his face, purpose in his life, sympathy and strength in all his actions.<sup>1</sup>

But he continues it was not only that

Jesus was alive and present to my friend as he had been to the eleven in the upper room. He was alive and present to me.<sup>2</sup>

As on the earlier occasion, Raven was self-critical about the experience, but it could not be gainsaid:

There was nothing strained or fantastic, abnormal or supernatural about it. Quite literally it was as simple and obvious as if my friend had had with him a revered and sympathetic colleague who listened to our talk and influenced our every movement by the atmosphere of his presence.<sup>3</sup>

So when in October 1909 he was offered the office of Dean of Emmanuel, he decided to accept, and that decision involved a decision to take Holy Orders. He was ordained in December and arrived at Emmanuel as Dean in January 1910 at the age of 24. Almost at once he was embroiled in controversy. The Master, William Chawner, who had been throughout his life a staunch supporter of the college chapel, suddenly ceased not only to be a communicant, but even to attend other services, and went further by circulating a controversial pamphlet to the undergraduates. The Governing Body was divided; parents of undergraduates were alarmed; candidates for admission withdrew. The young Dean was placed in an embarrassing position which was made more and not less difficult because, having himself only lately come through his own doubts and uncertainties, he had both an understanding sympathy for the Master's position, yet the necessity by his convictions and his office of opposing it.

The controversy subsided for the long vacation; Raven was married in June and he and his wife settled into the home for which they had waited so long. But October renewed the troubles. It now transpired that Raven had been appointed by the sceptics on the Governing Body and against the wishes of its more explicitly Christian members. His first attempt to resign evoked an ambiguous reply from the Master, and the Michaelmas and Lent Terms were a nightmare, which apart from his

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 82.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 91.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 95.

wife and his home would have been unbearable. The incident was only closed by the Master's death which occurred with tragic suddenness in the vacation.

He was to remain at Emmanuel until 1920, but on the outbreak of war in 1914 he went first to Tonbridge as an Assistant Master, and then in 1917 he volunteered for service abroad as a Chaplain. Here again God and his Christ were revealed to him in the sufferings and agonies of human warfare, as they had been revealed to him in the sufferings of Liverpool or Stoke-on-Trent. Whether in the trenches in front of La Bassée, in the horror and excitement of the battle of Cambrai, on the way to Vimy Ridge, or in the following months when he was blown up by a shell and gassed and sniped at, he had a well-nigh constant assurance of the presence of God in Christ.

We can well imagine that, the war over, it was hard to return to the *status quo*, and in 1920, with his growing family, he left Emmanuel for the college living of Bletchingley. He also became secretary of COPEC (Conference on Christian Politics, Economics, and Citizenship) and completed his book on *Apollinarianism* on which he was already working in the days at Liverpool. In 1920 he was also appointed a Chaplain to the King, but his most memorable conversations with King George V were not about theological niceties, but about the habits of birds and the breeding of budgerigars. After four years at Bletchingley he returned to that city which had been so significant in his earlier life and became a Canon of Liverpool Cathedral where he remained for eight years, and during the last two years (1931-2) he was also Chancellor. While at Liverpool he was active in the movement known as the Way of Renewal whose concern was both to inspire and instruct the clergy, so as to enable them better to fulfil their ministries. He is best remembered at the cathedral for his preaching, for the informal evening service which he instituted, and for the sense of fellowship which he created in the congregation. We may well believe that he had in mind those evening services in the old Colosseum which, however different in their setting and character, had meant so much to him in terms of faith and fellowship. It was at one of these cathedral services that two Liverpool women of generous size and Ulster extraction coming in late were directed to seats next to Mrs. Raven. Seeing Raven in the scarlet cassock of a royal Chaplain, the one whispered—'Who's that?' to which came the reply: 'What did I tell ye—the scarlet woman!' Not satisfied, the first turned to Mrs. Raven—'D'ye know who that is?' 'I'm afraid', said Mrs. Raven to both

women bending over to hear, 'it's my husband'—'Oh! isn't he sweet' they now remarked—only proving, as Raven loved to say, how hard it is to be scurrilous about anyone with whom we have some human kinship, however slight.

In 1932 he was elected to the Regius Professorship of Divinity at Cambridge which until 1940 had a Canonry of Ely attached, and soon afterwards to a Fellowship at Christ's, where he became Master in 1939. He retired in accordance with the new statutes in 1950, but by then he had also been Vice-Chancellor, a role which he filled with great distinction from 1947 to 1949. For four years after his retirement he was the first Warden of Madingley Hall, an appointment which like the purchase of the Hall itself did not escape the kind of waspish comment for which his detractors were always seeking an excuse.

On the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals he was one of the first to press for a realistic appraisal of academic stipends, and within the University he showed that, though he himself was no administrator, he could make wise use of experienced and skilful administration. Developing a case with eloquence, feeling, and fervour he often made an impact and secured results which might have been denied to a run-of-the-mill university politician. It is interesting to recall that it was to Raven as Vice-Chancellor that Wittgenstein went to discuss and eventually to decide on his resignation from the Chair of Philosophy. To all the ceremonial occasions of the University he brought a natural grace and dignity, and these included an honorary degree for the Queen (now the Queen Mother) as the first woman graduate of the University (an occasion specially pleasing to Raven who had often championed female causes, including the ordination of women) and the installation of Jan Christiaan Smuts as Chancellor. It is an indication of Raven's powers of persuasion in the causes of reform that at his instigation precedent was broken for the first time when academic representatives who were not graduates of Cambridge were invited to wear in the Senate House the robes appropriate to their university. It took almost twenty more years and the tonic of a Franks Commission for Oxford to be so radical.

But he was above all a college man for whom learning and friendships and faith were closely knit. During his time as Master he joined day by day in morning prayers in the college chapel. He was always an inspiring preacher—one of his most memorable sermons was preached as Vice-Chancellor to a packed congregation in Great St. Mary's—and over the years countless



undergraduates owed their faith, and many their Orders, to the Word of God which Charles Raven proclaimed both by his life and doctrine. In his professorial lectures at Cambridge he was peripatetic, stimulating, challenging, and topical. There are no doubt many lessons to be learnt from the fact that while his course on 'Religion in the Modern World' thrilled countless undergraduates, it was such that no one but himself could give it as he did, and it was virtually unexaminable even by himself. He was often accused of sweeping generalizations, but when these accusations came to his ears he could be relied upon to support his case with detailed references that delighted his friends as much as they irritated his critics. Nothing gladdened him more than undergraduate interest and friendship, and the presidency of a college club, especially the college Boat Club, was to him a genuine delight, and for the undergraduates every meeting was an impressive and encouraging occasion. After his last dinner as Master, undergraduates carried him shoulder-high back to the lodge—a tribute to the deep affection in which he was held. When Christ's College commemorated its Quincentenary in 1948—in the middle of his time as Vice-Chancellor—he made, on successive evenings, two masterly after-dinner speeches on the college and its history, and on the purpose of a university education, and not a phrase was duplicated. On one of the evenings, turning to portraits behind High Table he pointed to Milton and Darwin as representing two cosmic perspectives which the metaphysics of William Paley, well intentioned, well informed, and clearly argued though it be, could never contain, but which, he believed, might well be harmonized by rehabilitating in our own day some of the distinctive ideas and themes of Ralph Cudworth, the Cambridge Platonist.

This brings us conveniently to Raven's writings for we may recall that the general outlook and broad culture of the Cambridge Platonists, and of Ralph Cudworth in particular, were mediated to the scientific world by John Ray, and Raven's study of *John Ray, Naturalist: his Life and Work* may well prove to be his most significant book. A fellow naturalist who without any sycophancy broke through the social barriers of the seventeenth century and as a blacksmith's son became a Fellow of Trinity, who for conscience sake sacrificed security and career by refusing to declare his Covenant to be no oath, who produced books when 'straightened in means and racked with pain', who infected his family with a love of natural history, and whose most popular and influential work was, as its title expresses it, devoted to *The*

*Wisdom of God Manifested in the Works of Creation*—here in John Ray is a figure whose deepest loves and concerns were shared by Raven in full measure. The result is a masterpiece, a biography neglectful of no relevant detail, yet preserving the broad outlook of one of the first who tried 'to interpret the faith of a Christian in the light of a sound knowledge of nature', and whose 'love of birds and flowers' generated a theology 'appropriate to the faith of a scientific age'.

*English Naturalists from Neckam to Ray* (which was awarded a James Tait Black prize) is by way of being a supplementary volume. It surveys the curious attitude to nature recorded by medieval science and art; sketches the lives and thoughts of pioneers like William Turner who anticipated the scientific botanist; John Caius, a pioneer of animal study; Thomas Penny who laid the foundations of entomology, and Thomas Monffet whose merit was attention to detail; and portrays popularizers like Harrison, Betman, Lyte, Gerard, and Topsell, some of whom were despicable rogues and others honest amateurs. The genuine explorers with whom Raven next deals were men like John Parkinson, Thomas Johnson, William How, and Christopher Merret who initiated genuine scientific development; and the survey closes with a study of Sir Thomas Browne and his *Religio Medici*, with its quite modern concern for factual evidence, observation, and experiment.

The books which set out Raven's own version of a *Religio Medici* suited to our own day, the books which perhaps best represent the full flowering of his thoughts on science as well as on the Christian faith and life, are those which reprint the Gifford lectures which he delivered in the University of Edinburgh in 1951–2 with the title of *Natural Religion and Christian Theology*. In many ways they take us back to one of his earliest works, *The Creator Spirit*, which combined in one volume Noble lectures at Harvard with Hulsean lectures at Cambridge. There, as in his Giffords, he was arguing for a single vision, and showing that themes in biology and psychology would lead 'to a larger concept of God and of Jesus, a worthier doctrine of the spirit, and a clearer apprehension of Christianity and the Church'. In this way he believed that there could emerge a Christ-centred view of the universe, which did justice both to science and to religion.

The Giffords articulate this hope some twenty-five years later. Their broad theme is firstly the 'continuity' of nature and supernatural which, he argues, 'belong together'. Secondly, he argues

that without denying the magnificent achievements in mathematics and physics associated with, for example, Copernicus, Galileo, Descartes, and Newton, it is nevertheless true that scientific thought has for too long been at the mercy of their key ideas which, when philosophically articulated, became the dominant mechanism and determinism of the late nineteenth century, and has consequently neglected those 'organic and holistic categories' which characterized the zoologists and botanists of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, whose brilliant achievements have been almost universally overlooked in traditional histories of science. It follows, thirdly, from these two claims that sauce for the scientific goose must be sauce for the religious gander, and that if we essay the one vision of nature and supernatural Christian experience will need to be reinterpreted from this 'holistic' standpoint which Raven himself associated with Lloyd Morgan, A. N. Whitehead, and J. C. Smuts. Raven's claim is that in such a theological reinterpretation the category of the personal will be definitive, and the idea of God suited to such an incarnational philosophy will be in Charles Kingsley's phrase 'a living, immanent, ever-working God', not the absentee landlord of a mechanistic deism. Such a theology will also do more justice to the concept of community. As for eternal life, we are what we love, and our survival is conditional on the quality of our relationships, a quality which is revealed, and as we follow Him, imparted to us, by Jesus Christ.

Like some radical theologians today he too speaks of a 'new reformation', and it is a 'reformation' that would arise from scientific and in that sense 'secular' concerns, but the great difference with Raven is that his new reformation was based on the broad reasonableness of a natural piety rather than on the theological extravagancies, not to say absurd paradoxes, which often capture the contemporary scene under the guise of philosophical theology or genuine commitment.

Two further points are worthy of mention. If a Christian sponsors 'organic and holistic categories', there is always a danger that he will do less than justice to the uniqueness of Christ. Raven was alert to this difficulty. For him, the uniqueness of Christ is not the uniqueness of the 'exceptional', but the uniqueness of the 'representative'—of someone who 'sums up in Himself the whole process of the creative, redemptive and sanctifying work of God'.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Natural Religion and Christian Theology*, vol. ii: *Experience and Interpretation*, pp. 103-4.

Secondly, advocates of the New Reformation in our own day are often charged with atheism. Not so Raven. I suggest that this is because all his writings are in a characteristic way 'devotional'; to read them is to be aware that here is someone who who has 'been with Jesus'.<sup>1</sup> His conversion experiences lay behind all his work. Being in this way 'sure' of what he believed, his task was constantly to explicate, and to understand on the most comprehensive map possible, this which had been revealed to him.

Raven recognized the challenge that would arise for his single vision if ever the physical sciences claimed to describe exhaustively the 'nature' which had fascinated John Ray as it fascinated himself. His answer was that the mistake of such a claim would be 'to equate the whole with one of its parts'.<sup>2</sup> Life had 'meaning and values', 'insights and adventures' which such discourse could not contain. It might, however, be countered that, if we aim at a single vision, something more positive needs to be said about the status of concepts in what used to be called the exact sciences. The problem was already implicit in the Appendix which Joseph Needham wrote at Raven's invitation to *The Creator Spirit*. Raven readily and regretfully recognized that his lack of training, dating back to his school-days, in mathematics, physics, and chemistry brought an inevitable limitation at this point. Suffice it to say that contemporary concerns with the logical variegation of language and with the logical status of key-concepts do something to meet this problem. Meanwhile his plea for the single vision, often repeated as in his *Science, Religion and the Future* (1943), and for a continuing dialogue between theology and other disciplines, has never been more necessary than it is today, and its timeliness can be seen from yet another direction in his *Science, Medicine and Morals* (1959).

His last book *Teilhard de Chardin: Scientist and Seer* is a study of one who, like Raven himself, worked to harmonize science and religion within a Christian interpretation of the evolutionary process. He was also a lonely and much misunderstood figure whom 'the Vatican exiled and did its best to silence'. Despite obvious differences, the two were in more important ways similar, and it is not surprising that, encouraged by their mutual friend Dr. George Barbour of Cincinnati, Raven proved to be so enthusiastic a disciple, and showed himself ready to defend de Chardin against critics with characteristic fervour and, some might say, violence.

<sup>1</sup> Acts iv. 13.

<sup>2</sup> *Teilhard de Chardin*, p. 213.

From his writings on science and religion we may turn to his *Apollinarianism* which is his one work of pure theological scholarship. It occupied him for some fifteen years, was hammered out on the anvil of his theological struggles, and came with him through the war years. It is an essay on the Christology of the earlier Church and has become a standard work. He shows how the heresy of Apollinarianism 'grew naturally and inevitably from the parent stock of Christian Hellenism',<sup>1</sup> and that in interpreting the divinity of Jesus it inevitably compromised his humanity. At the same time he readily granted that Apollinarius was orthodox enough in certain directions, e.g. 'in his doctrines of Kenosis, of the *Communicatio Idiomatum* and of the eternal aspect of the Incarnation'.<sup>2</sup> He had, however, another and more controversial conclusion: 'It is not so generally recognised that his belief in the divine personality of Christ has also become part of the Catholic tradition, and that its acceptance has been the cause of no small embarrassment to those who in loyalty to that tradition are bound to condemn him as a heretic, while endorsing and maintaining the very belief for which he was cast out.'<sup>2</sup> He was aware that this might to some seem to be 'modernist prejudice', and he might have added that in any case some might think that the Liverpool Club leader, for whom the humanity of Jesus was obviously a very precious theme, was bound to be biased in an Antiochene direction. Be that as it may, he confirms in the preface that 'when the task was begun I was myself Apollinarian in the sense that I accepted belief in the impersonal humanity of our Lord'. His investigation, however, forced him to the conviction that this view was untenable.

It will already be clear that his writings were as widely ranging as his life. His many books expounding the Gospel were always frank and challenging, combining a deep sensitivity to suffering with a wider vision and hope. Sometimes they were gently persuasive, e.g. *What think ye of Christ?*, *Our Salvation*, *The Quest of Religion*, *Jesus and the Gospel of Love*, *The Gospel and the Church*. The Church for all its failures, for all its moral and intellectual inadequacies, for all its stiffness and lack of life, yet carried the hope of renewal, the gospel of God's love made plain in Jesus. At least one book, however, *Good News of God*, completed during his 1943 illness, and when it seemed as if this book might be his last, was thought by some to exhibit not only vehemence, as he had hoped, but even venom as it criticized much that passes for Christian belief and practice. In *A Wanderer's*

<sup>1</sup> Op. cit., p. 273.

<sup>2</sup> Op. cit., p. 231.

Way he had confessed that 'indignation comes easily'<sup>1</sup> and age never removed this youthful trait. But not many are as alert to their weaknesses as Raven was.

There were other books which reflected his interest in social problems and gave the theological background to his socialism in politics as well as to his pacifism. We may mention, for example, *Is War Obsolete?* and *War and the Christian*. But his most important contribution in this field is his *Christian Socialism (1848-54)* which surveys the work of J. M. Ludlow, F. D. Maurice, C. Kingsley, T. Hughes, and E. V. Neale against the background of evangelicalism and its 'crude individualism', and of the early Oxford Movement, 'reactionary' and 'neglectful in social matters', and also in the light of predecessors like Robert Owen, the lonely rebel, like Southey who, as a churchman and a tory, was a rather surprising ally, and like Coleridge who here, as elsewhere, was the 'seminal mind'. After giving an authoritative survey of the Christian socialists, Raven argues that in general their message is that any political movement needs for its success to supply both an adequate perspective, and power for its fulfilment; and that in particular Christianity can supply to socialism both a vision—in which the individual and society are harmonized—and the power to sustain it and carry it through. Our moribund political parties—socialist or other—might well take heed.

Such was the phenomenal range of Raven's learning, and I have only mentioned his more important works. But with learning went a friendly, outgoing personality. His restless, energetic, crusading spirit, and an eloquence which matched the range and quality of his intellectual gifts—few would have guessed that at the start of his ministry he was terrified of public speaking and had to memorize every word—all this meant that his ministry and influence went far beyond the written page. He was influential as a pioneer in the ecumenical movement, though in later life he regretted the time and energy he had devoted to it in the early days, time and energy which he then judged, probably rightly, could have been better spent. He saved from floundering what later became the Pugwash conference. With moral courage and transparent honesty he supported many unpopular causes. He was associated with George Lansbury and with Dick Sheppard in their renunciation of war and was influential in the Fellowship of Reconciliation and in the Peace Pledge Union. Inevitably the war of 1939-45 stirred him deeply, but he

<sup>1</sup> *A Wanderer's Way*, p. 162.

exercised a remarkable self-constraint, and his warm-hearted and generous disposition, and the friendships he treasured, helped him through a very difficult period which was made none the easier by his own severe illness in 1943, and then the sudden death of his wife in 1944. Her loving influence was always great, but never greater than in those war years. Early in the war he had endeared himself to service men evacuated from Dunkirk and later to short-course cadets who found themselves accommodated in college. His friends included a Field Marshal, Jan Christiaan Smuts, an Honorary Fellow of Christ's whom he was thrilled to instal as Chancellor of the University in 1948. They had also included William Temple, who shared his evangelistic and apologetic concerns and more widely his socialist, though not his pacifist, opinions. It may perhaps be recorded that in a public controversy some little while before 1939 on the Christian attitude to war, when Raven had virtually accused the Archbishop of apostasy, he received a private letter from Temple: 'The trouble is, Charles, that you're thin and I am fat.' Controversy had been cut through by friendship and Temple's laugh often echoed in Christ's even in the war years and until Temple's death in 1944. There are others in Church and University who could likewise speak of generous reconciliations.

At High Table or in the Combination Room, in peace or in war, no one would have entertained guests, his own or those of his colleagues, with a greater charm or graciousness. His conversation never faltered; it was never cheap or superficial, and it was always enthusiastic. With his characteristic smile and the raising of an eyebrow he often remarked that he had no sense of discretion. But when he was indiscreet it was almost always to encourage a young man in his hopes, or designed to recapture for an old man a lost sense of importance.

He had friends amongst men of all creeds and classes and opinions. He was willing to travel virtually anywhere to talk to a group, however small its numbers and however modest its capabilities, and whether it met in a Methodist church hall or a Bohemian attic. With Glasgow lads at Iona or at a Portsmouth Diocesan Youth Conference at Canford School, he would show the same seriousness with unending questions, and the same genuine concern for the questioner. A stonemason working on the building of Iona Abbey would go to stay at the Master's Lodge, and Raven often declared that he would be content to spend eternity with 'a working-class moth collector'.

It is perhaps here that reference is best made to his work as

a field naturalist, where he distinguished himself in botany, entomology, and ornithology. It was as botanist that his most intensive field work was done. He painted well over 2,000 different wild flowers, and with his son John painted over 300 different sub-species of Hawkweed. He was President of the Botanical Society of the British Isles from 1951 to 1955.

As an entomologist his interest centred on Lepidoptera. He collected both butterflies and moths, but he was especially keen on moth collecting which was his first love. The Family Noctuidae held pride of place, although he did more work on the Family Geometridae in general, the Sub-family Boarmiinae in particular.

He was a strong opponent of the widely held theory of industrial melanism in Lepidoptera. He was Chairman of the Rothschild-Cockayne-Kettlewell Trust which forms the National Collection of British Lepidoptera housed at Tring.

As an ornithologist he was extremely competent, having painted many studies of birds—some in flight and others in greater detail. He was a pioneer bird photographer and his books on this subject *In Praise of Birds*, *The Ramblings of a Bird-lover*, *Bird Haunts and Bird Behaviour* had considerable vogue in the 1920's. He was a Fellow of the Linnaean Society.

A fellow naturalist writes: 'In the field, Raven was not only a delightful companion with an immense knowledge of most of the things around him, but he was also endowed with restless energy and a zest which combined an extremely keen power of observation with an enquiring mind.'

After his retirement he displayed the same remarkable energy, and visited India as well as travelling several times to America. On a visit to America in 1954, ten years after the death of his wife, he married the widow of Mr. John F. Moors of Brookline, but she died in the same year. Mr. and Mrs. Moors were his oldest American friends whom he had first met when over for the Noble lectures at Harvard in 1926, and in their home much of his second series of Gifford lectures had been written. In 1956 he married Mme N. Hélène Jeanty who during the Nazi occupation of Belgium had shown outstanding courage in feigning madness so as to preserve the life of her husband M. Paul Jeanty, though her efforts were eventually unsuccessful for political reasons. From their homes at Cambridge and Brussels they worked for social reconstruction in Europe, and for a stirring of men's consciences to the needs of the less fortunate.

In the last few years of his life he displayed great courage in



the face of increasing heart trouble, though he had made a remarkable recovery from his earlier severe illness. When he preached his last sermon to undergraduates at Oxford within two months of his death, few of the congregation realized the physical strain he was under, and the suffering he endured before and after the service. He died on 8 July 1964.

At his death he had been a Fellow of the British Academy for nearly twenty years. He was a Trustee of the British Museum. He was appointed to lecture on some seventeen foundations. He received honorary degrees from many universities in Britain, North America, and India. But perhaps he treasured most his honorary D.Sc. at Manchester for it was symbolic of his life-long desire to harmonize the two visions of science and religion.

Being human, he had his dislikes. He disliked the formality of the great occasion, though he delighted in its colour and pageantry; he disliked even science when it seemed to deny the broad vision and fullness of life; though he was for many years a Vice-President of the Modern Churchman's Union, he disliked that brand of liberalism which seems to be destructive of faith rather than concerned constructively with establishing its reasonableness; he disliked the neo-orthodoxy of a Barth because of its separation of nature and grace; while he disliked the emotional and intellectual excesses of some Evangelicals, he disliked even more what he feared might too easily become the empty formalities, not to say superstitions, of the Catholic tradition. All of which meant that, though he himself bore no malice, he was never without his detractors, not to say enemies. He would have disliked much about a bishop's life, but at one time it appealed to him, and he would undoubtedly have brought to the task an unusual intellectual distinction, a breadth of vision, and a powerful personality, and his years as Vice-Chancellor showed that he could preside wisely over a great institution. There may have been reasons, and even good reasons, why he was never made a bishop. Enduring committees with restless impatience, he would surely have found the *trivia* of a Diocese even more tiresome and frustrating than those of a college, and though he would then have had an official secretary, there would almost certainly have been no skilled administration on whose expertise he could rely. Even so, it would seem inexcusable that his advice was not more often sought in the counsels of the Church.

For Charles Raven the life of a college was ideally an interweaving of three strands—learning, friendships, and faith, and his own life could be given a similar characterization. There

were his scholarly interests in theology and science, and his lifelong desire so to inform each with the cares of the other as to join what so many would put asunder; the sensitivity and warm-heartedness which made him generous in friendship also lay behind his social concerns and reforming zeal; and evident in his learning and in his social concerns alike were the insight, the burning convictions, and the restlessness of the prophet and visionary. Sunsets and moonlight, a moth emerging from its pupa, or the patterns of a bird's feathering—all these provided him with glimpses of the eternal; and God also met him in splendour when he saw in Liverpool a young couple love-making on a seat by the roadside on St. James's Mount. When in the same city he saw the proprietor of a dingy shop in shirt sleeves dispensing packets of fish and chips wrapped in newspaper to a crowd of shawl-clad women, again there was, he tells us, 'of a sudden the glory; and God fulfilling his eternal task, giving to his children their daily bread'.<sup>1</sup> In this way, nature and human nature constantly revealed God.

He had to the end something of the endearing impulsiveness of the small child; but he had also the intellect of a giant, and the product was a powerful and quite outstanding personality. Yet while no one could hear him and be unmoved, his was a vision so unusual as to earn for him for most of his life a sense of loneliness where appreciation meant much, and where criticism could be peculiarly wounding. With his rare sensitivity, rich humanity, and zest for life; with the intellectual honesty, moral courage, and reforming zeal of the prophet; and with the large concerns of the evangelist, he always saw life as a struggle whose sufferings are deep and whose loneliness can be profound. He once remarked that it is the old, and not the young, who are haunted by the greatest doubts. Not surprisingly his favourite biblical passage was Romans viii with its vision of the whole creation groaning and travailing together in pain and yet in this very pain and suffering finding the redeeming love of God, which works all things together for good, and from which not even death can separate us.

In the preface to *The Creator Spirit* he remarks significantly that he is 'prepared to fail again in a great venture than try to win success in a small one'. For the Christian, failure and success are each judged, however, in relation to a faithfulness which fulfils both, and undoubtedly throughout his life Charles Raven was faithful to the demands of life in all its fullness. If he was too

<sup>1</sup> *A Wanderer's Way*, p. 85.

involved in life to see it steadily, he certainly saw it whole. He was, like Paul, 'not disobedient unto the heavenly vision'<sup>1</sup> and also, like Paul, he knew 'that we must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God'.<sup>2</sup>

I. T. RAMSEY

<sup>1</sup> Acts xxvi. 19.

<sup>2</sup> Acts xiv. 22.